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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8157
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0695
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA PRIORITY 0010
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 9475

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 000586

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO EUR/SCE AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2013

TAGS: EU EUN PGOV PREL SA SR UNMIK YI

SUBJECT: SAUDI FM: RECOGNITION OF KOSOVO WILL TAKE MORE TIME

REF: A. SECSTATE 18802

IB. RIYADH 298

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Gfoeller for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

I1. (C) In a meeting with Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal on April 6, the Ambassador queried him on the SAG's intentions regarding the recognition of Kosovo. Saud responded that Saudi Arabia will likely recognize Kosovo in "the next few months," but provided no further information on timing. He explained the SAG had initially delayed recognition of Kosovo until there was more European unity on this issue and that he did not want quick Saudi recognition to appear to make Kosovo appear as an Islamic issue, when it should be solely a European one. Saud then volunteered that the Kingdom had been approached by the Russians on this topic. He informed us he had told the Russians that Saudi Arabia would not be one of the first nations to recognize Kosovo, but would "once most of Europe did."

I2. (C) COMMENT. The Saudi delay in recognizing Kosovo is most likely attributable to Russian pressure, with the Saudis unwilling to potentially jeopardize growing commercial and military relations with Moscow. That said, eventual Saudi recognition of Kosovo seems highly likely, probably sometime this year. END COMMENT.

FRAKER